THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The reported incident took place on 11-11-1994 late in the evening. The complaint was lodged by the child and his mother with the Police Station (IITF' 94) at Gate No. 2, Pragati Maidan. The two regular Security Guards of the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) were taken into custody by the Delhi Police on 22-11-1994. The same day the incident was reported to the Management for disciplinary action. The two security guards are under suspension and presently under judicial costody.

(c) and (d) The ITPO has not received any reaction to this incident from any of the participants, foreign or Indian.

(e) All the officials of the Security Unit are fully aware of the disciplinary action under the ITPO service and conduct rules. They are fully aware that as and when there are cases of misconduct, unauthorised absence from duty etc. and if by chance any such case takes place, ITPO will take strict disciplinary action against them.

The Unit of Delhi Police stationed at Pragati Maidan during IITF' 94 has been quite active as it has been taking appropriate action whenever any unlawful incident takes place.

Review of BOP cover to India by GATT

767. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report, published in the Times of India dated 27th October, 1994 under the caption "GATT to review Balance of Payment cover to India".

(b) if so, what are the facts and relevant details in this regard;

(c) what are the details of the benefits available under the balance of payments (BOP) cover available to India; and

(d) what will be the concrete negative impact of the withdrawal of the BOP cover ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The GATT Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions held simplified consultations with India under Article XVIII of the GATT on 15 November, 1994. The Committee has decided to hold full consultations late next year.

(c) GATT provides inter-alia that countries the economy of which can only support low standards of living and are in the early stages of development may control the general level of their imports by restricting the quantity or value of the merchandise permitted to be imported provided the import restrictions do not exceed those necessary (a) to forestall the threat of, or to stop, a serious decline in its monetary reserves, or (b) in the case of a contracting party with inadequate monetary reserves, to achieve a reasonable rate of increase in its reserves.

(d) Does not arise.

Demand regarding budgetary provision towards exports subsidy

768. SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI :
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Commerce Ministry has forwarded a demand to the

Cabinet Committee on Tax and Investment (CCTI) for making a budgetary provision of Rs. 300 crores towards export subsidy :

(b) what are the factors which the Ministry is attributing for growth of exports in the post-GATT Scenario; and

(c) whether the cheap labour available in the country is a major factor of competitive advantage to the Indian exporters ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) In the post-GATT Scenario, sizeable increases in trade are expected to occur in the areas of clothing, agriculture, forestry and fishery products. Since India's existing and potential export competitiveness lies in these areas, it is expected that India would get its due share in the overall growth of exports in the post-GATT scenario.

(c) Labour is only one among a host of other factors which determine the competitive advantage of the Indian economy.

Amendments in laws following GATT Retification

769. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA :
SHRIMATI MIRA DAS :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of laws and amending laws to be enacted as a follow up of GATT ratification; and

(b) whether the above laws being framed have taken enough care about the farmers' interests and if so, how it would be done generally and in terms of acquiring new varieties of seeds by farmers at reasonable rates?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) To safeguard our interests and meet our obligations, amendments at various stages are likely mainly to the Customs Tariff Act (in respect of Anti-Dumping and Countervailing provisions); the Copyright Act; the Trade and Merchandise Marks Act; the Patents Act; the Industrial Design Act; and laws to deal with restrictive trade practices. Fresh legislation would need to be considered in the areas of geographical indications, lay-out designs of integrated circuits, undisclosed information, plant variety protection and safeguards.

The legislation on plant variety protection is in the process of being drafted and it would address issues of farmers' interests.

Stagnation in Tea production

770. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the stagnancy in the production of tea in the country

(b) the tea producing areas where stagnancy has been mostly there;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to remove the stagnation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Production of tea in the country has been increasing steadily. Between 1983 to 1993, there has been an increase of nearly 30% in overall production level in the country with all major tea growing regions showing a steady increase.